Labour Relations in the Colony

with freight rates and stevedoring charges, the employers were disorganised and were, for the most part, in active competition with each other. They were very conscious of the considerable improvements in living and working conditions which had been made by them and they felt that they were entitled to expect, if not the gratitude of their workmen, at least a period of industrial calm free from further demands. They were alarmed at the increase in the number of the Trades Union, which meant only one thing to them and that was more and more and bigger and bigger demands by labour until commercial life became impossible. It seemed quite clear to the majority of the employers that the Unions would have to be fought and brought to their senses or broken, and that this must be done before they became too strong.

Although the continued anti-British broadcasts from Cairo had undoubtedly had their effect on the general atmosphere in the Colony, which the activities of the nationalist National United Front Party had done nothing to improve, labour as a whole was behaving reasonably well. There were, of course, some differences of opinion between individuals and Managements, but the two main labour problems were being dealt with. The first of these problems, which was not in any way extraordinary and concerned shift rates for stevedores, was under discussion between employers and the Labour Department of Government, and a satisfactory settlement was in sight. The second problem was out of the ordinary and was a direct result of the improved housing conditions which many workmen now enjoyed. Put simply the trouble was that the provision of better and modern housing had increased the cost of living of the occupants to a point where, on their wage scales, they could not make both ends meet and were distinctly worse off financially than they had been before the new houses and flats were available. The reason for this curious state of affairs was not increased rent, because although there had been an increase it had been cushioned by subsidisation by Government, the Refinery, the Port Trust and the commercial houses which provided housing for their employees. Previously many of the workmen concerned had been living three or four families

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Dhow Building

Dhows are built at Maala by a number of Hadhrami merchants settled in Aden. They turn out about seven vessels a year, the average carrying capacity of which is about 200 tons. The dhows are constructed of Indian teak from the Malabar coast and are well built and fast. They sail to India (Bombay and the Malabar coast) and to the East African coast as well as to neighbouring Arabian ports, and take a large share in local trade, in spite of the competition of the coasting steamers of Messrs. Cowasjee Dinshaw & Brothers and of Monsieur A. Besse (Halal Shipping Company). Monsieur Besse now maintains a fleet of dhows in addition to his motor vessels. Many of these dhows are equipped with auxiliary engines

Soap Manufacturing

A soap manufacturing industry started by Monsieur Besse in December, 1932, at Maala is progressing satisfactorily. The soap is manufactured by boiling coconut oil and cold processes. Local labour of 40 men is employed, and the output is about 50 cases daily, each case containing 200 cakes, which are disposed of locally or exported to the Red Sea Ports.

Dyeing

There are three factories which do business in dyeing cloth and each employs on an average about 60 persons daily. There are in addition about 18 dyers who do business on a small scale. The dyed goods are mainly exported to Mombasa, Mogadiscio, Massowa, Hodeidah, and the interior of Arabia.

Cigarette Making

The cigarette industry is conducted on a fairly large scale by Jews and Greeks with tobacco imported from Egypt.

VII.—COMMERCE

Customs

Aden being a free port, there are no customs duties.

Trade

The trade of Aden is mainly transhipment as the port is a centre for trade between all ports of the world and the neigbouring territories. The principal business is in skins, hides, coffee, cotton piece goods, grain and pulse, sugar, spices, oils, tobacco, gums, shells and salt. The total value of the seaborne trade in the year under report (12 months January to December, 1938) exclusive of transhipment cargo, was Rs. 12,16,02,203 (imports Rs. 8,02,17,766, and exports Rs. 4,13,84,437), showing a decrease of Rs. 42,91,828 as compared